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Organic Food Products

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Report Highlights:

The Israeli government established a new law with specific requirements that must be met in order to use the Israeli organic labels. However, the Israeli organic certification is not a requirement for importing or selling organic food in Israel. According to the press, the lack of clarity of this law could cause confusion in the market.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Annual Report
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[IS]

Organic Food Now Under Governmental Control

The Ministry of Agriculture began controlling vegetable organic produce and processed food products on September 2, 2008 with new Israeli organic food law which reflect the European Organic laws. Vegetable organic products constitute about 37 percent of all organic sales in Israel. Starting September 2009, the law will also apply to livestock raised using organic methods.

The organic certification is not a requirement for importing organic food into Israel. However, in order to qualify for using the Israeli organic certification, the Israeli importer must submit to the Israeli Plant Protection and Inspection Services (P.P.I.S.) the appropriate documents for each organic product that show that his organic products meet the European Organic Regulations (EEC 2092/91). The new law will not prohibit or limit the use of the term 'organic', and any producer/importer will still be able to label his produce as they wish. However, if they wish to use the Israeli organic seal, than it has to be approved by the PPIS.

Once the importer obtains the approval from PPIS (about 30 days) he can begin to use the Israeli organic seal. The importer should present the documents to Ms. Pnina Oren, Head of the Standardization Department; Tel: 972-3-9681526; Mobile: 972-50-6241761; Email: pninao@moag.gov.il

According to articles from Israeli newspapers, this law is not so clear and could even cause confusion in the market. Knowing that a legal arrangement exists may lead consumers to mistakenly assume that the word 'organic' appearing on labels means that the product is being supervised by the Ministry of Agriculture, when it actually may not be. Due to the fact that this is a problematic law, post estimates that the Ministry of Agriculture would take steps to change the law by the end of 2009.



According to the approved law, regulated organic products (approved by the PPIS) will be labeled with two symbols: the Agriculture Ministry's organic logo (top left label) and that of one out of the three organizations - Agrior, Skal Israel or IQC (Center for Quality Control), which were approved by the Ministry for this purpose.

In addition to the certification, according to the new law, any store that sells both organic and nonorganic products must set up a separate stand for the organic food so that people do

not get confused. For example, organic tomatoes cannot be sold right next to regular tomatoes. Furthermore, the stand must have a large sign indicating that organic food is sold there.

By instituting this control system, Israel will join the EU, the US, Japan, Australia and other countries which already mandate adherence to legal laws in the production of organic food.